

IMMEDIATE DISASTER RELIEF FOR AMERICA'S FARMERS

(Mr. REHBERG asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REHBERG. Mr. Speaker, I again come to the well of this great Chamber to implore my colleagues to extend immediate and desperately needed disaster relief to tens of thousands of American farmers and ranchers now suffering from years of drought.

If Congress is to keep alive the American family farmer, we must act this year to provide immediate and necessary disaster assistance. Help is necessary for more than a dozen States crippled by the devastating one-two punch of adverse weather conditions and depressed commodity prices.

I ask my colleagues from ag-producing States and from ag-consuming States to join our fight to secure disaster assistance this year for our farm families before it is too late.

MAY IS ASIAN/PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

(Ms. SANCHEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SANCHEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to invite my colleagues to join me in celebrating May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month.

The theme of this year's celebration is unity and freedom, which is an appropriate reminder that America is strong when people of all cultures and backgrounds unite.

Asian Americans have proudly contributed to America's culture, its physical landscape, and to its defense. Along the way, Asian Americans have had to endure many hardships, including the unnecessary internment of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II and the exclusion of Chinese immigrants beginning in 1882.

The lessons we learned then and the challenges we now face show us that in order to maintain the freedoms we enjoy today, we must unite as a country and face our challenges together as a Nation.

As the proud representative of the largest Vietnamese community outside of Vietnam, I salute my constituents and all Asian/Pacific Islander Americans during the month of May for their contributions and achievements that have helped to make America strong.

MEDICARE PHYSICIAN REIMBURSEMENTS

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, we are always being asked, what are you hearing out there? What are you hearing out there in your district? I will tell my colleagues what I am hearing. I am hearing, "I cannot find a doctor."

I receive countless calls and letters from people in Colorado regarding Medicare physician reimbursements and how it is affecting their access to doctors. Physicians have either decided to no longer accept any new Medicare patients or not see their current Medicare patients because they are losing money due to reimbursement payments not covering the costs. In Colorado Springs 2 months ago, one-third of all doctors under the Colorado Springs Health Partners program dropped all of their Medicare, Medicaid and Tricare patients.

So much focus over the last several years has been on preserving and strengthening the Medicare trust fund that we have lost sight of the fact that if a Medicare recipient cannot find a doctor, we have a program in name only. Unfortunately, in Colorado and many other parts of the country, that is what has happened. Reforms need to be implemented now to restore Medicare, the Medicare program, as it was intended to be.

I believe that reducing Medicare's physician payments will have a devastating impact on physician reimbursement and put at risk seniors' access to medical services.

PICTURES ON ENVELOPES

(Mr. LAMPSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. LAMPSON. Mr. Speaker, National Missing Children's Day is coming up on May 25. I want to remind my colleagues about what we can do in our offices to help find missing children.

According to the FBI's National Crime Information Center, nearly 2,000 children are reported missing every day in our Nation. One in 6 children is recovered as a result of their picture being distributed, and it is vital that we do more to bring missing children home and safeguard our youth.

Printing the pictures of missing children on our envelopes is a simple way we can get involved and help take a stand against child abduction and victimization, making our districts safer for our constituents. It is simple. For more information on how to get pictures printed on your envelopes, contact the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 703-274-3900, and ask to speak to the Public Affairs Department.

By adding pictures to our office envelopes, we can help picture them home. Please, I say to my colleagues, let us not forget Ludwig Koons. He is being held in a compound in Italy where there is pornography and prostitution. We need to bring our children home, and we need help.

SEPTEMBER 11 PROGNOSTICATING

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, there are people in Washington who treat politics like a sport, and sometimes it gets rough. That should be no surprise. But some things should be off limits.

Mr. Speaker, for 8 months our country has been at war. It is a war that began when 19 evil men turned jumbo jets into missiles and killed 3,000 innocent people because they were Americans. Our President has led the world in a quest for justice. American soldiers are fighting and dying to keep the world safe, and President Bush has the awesome and heavy responsibility of commanding them.

But there is an election around the bend and some of our friends on the other side of the aisle have decided it is time to start attacking the President. They are attacking him for not making predictions he could not reasonably have made. They are attacking him for not connecting the dots between thousands of intelligence briefings that none of them could have connected either.

Mr. Speaker, this is wrong. When our fighting men and women are risking everything to keep us safe, the least we can do is to put partisanship aside.

SECRET PLAN FOR INCREASE IN DEFICIT SPENDING

(Mr. EDWARDS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. Speaker, rumor has it that the Republican leadership has a secret plan to allow an increase in deficit spending by \$750 billion without even requiring a vote on it in the House. To do so would be wrong, and for several reasons.

First, we have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to try to balance our budget and not break their backs with the burden of an ever-increasing national debt, which is already \$6 trillion, the interest on which cost taxpayers last year alone \$360 billion in taxes paid.

Second, deficit spending puts at risk Social Security and Medicare. We have a responsibility to our seniors to protect these 2 vital programs, but \$750 billion in deficit spending would certainly undermine them.

I can understand why the Republican leadership would want to allow an enormous increase in deficit spending in secret and without a public vote, but to do so would be wrong; wrong for our children, wrong for our seniors, and wrong for Americans who believe in an open democracy.

MEMORIAL DAY MEMORIAL

(Mr. GIBBONS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GIBBONS. Mr. Speaker, I come to the well here to express my concerns that Memorial Day is losing its true meaning. It has degenerated into a day